

Sector briefing

Biotechnology & Pharmaceutical Opportunities in Singapore

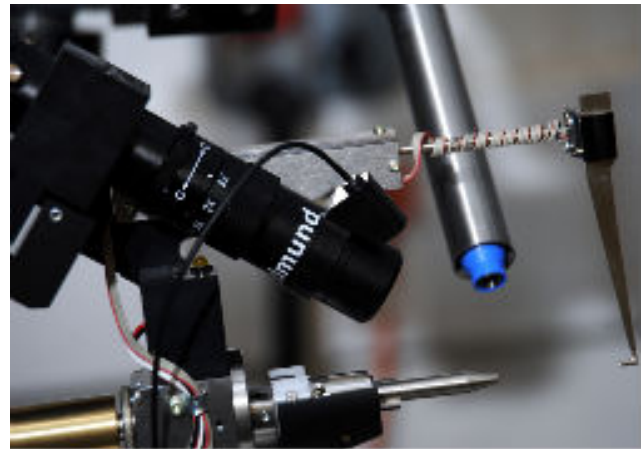
Why Singapore?

Singapore embarked on its Biomedical Sciences (BMS) initiative in 2000 to develop the pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, medical technology and healthcare sectors, as part of its move to a knowledge based economy. Since then, the BMS sector has grown rapidly, and it is now the second-largest manufacturing cluster, with nearly 90% of the output from pharmaceuticals, followed by medical devices. The manufacturing sector contributes to a quarter of Singapore's economy.

Singapore aims to grow its BMS output to £12.5 billion by 2015, which is well on track with ongoing public and private sector investment.

Singapore was rated among the world's top 5 biotech spots by Fiercemonitor, in 2007.

Find general information on the Singapore market conditions on [UKTI's website](#). [The Doing Business Guide for Singapore](#) gives an overview of Singapore's economy, business culture, potential opportunities and an introduction to other relevant issues.



Singapore aims to grow its Biomedical Sciences output to £12.5 billion by 2015.

Opportunities

The BMS sector is driven by two key bodies, the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR), and the Economic Development Board (EDB), with high level advisory committees to chart its course. The biomedical city, Biopolis, now in its phase IV, locates public and private R&D centres, while Tuas Pharma Park offers shared facilities for pharmaceutical manufacturers. A medical technology cluster in the west will be developed to accelerate its growth.

There are now 12 global pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies in Singapore who have invested in over 25 commercial-manufacturing facilities. Another seven plants are set to open in the next three years. The BMS sector is predicted to grow between 5 - 10% in 2010.

A brief overview of the main sectors of activity will highlight some potential opportunities:

R&D

A new national research structure was set up in 2006, with the Research, Innovation and Enterprise Council chaired by the Prime Minister, under the new National Research Foundation. NRF has a budget of £2.5 billion over 5 years for 3 targeted sectors: biomedical sciences, environment and water technologies, and interactive and digital media. R&D funds from NRF, A*STAR and the Ministry of Health are primarily for research into areas such as oncology, eye diseases, infectious diseases, and medical devices. Other R&D programmes to spur life sciences research include The Translational Clinical Research programme run by the National Medical Research Council, and the Clinician-Scientist Award, among others.

There are over 4,300 researchers engaged in BMS R&D in 50 companies and 30 public sector institutes, with an annual R&D budget of around £0.5 billion.

Pharmaceuticals

Leading pharmaceutical companies such as GlaxoSmithKline, Merck Sharp & Dohme, Schering-Plough, Wyeth, Pfizer, Abbott, Novartis, Lonza have set up large scale manufacturing facilities in Singapore. Fixed

asset investments reached £0.6 billion in 2009. Following large scale investment from API manufacturers, Singapore is now focusing on biologics, and has attracted US\$2 billion worth of investments in the last four years, for 6 new plants.

A number of pharmaceutical MNCs also have their Asia Pacific HQ in Singapore. Besides sales, marketing and distribution, they also undertake R&D, and six new R&D bases were established in 2009. They also partner Singapore's multi-disciplinary scientific and clinical network to develop new drugs and therapies.

Biotechnology

Considerable investment has been made to nurture and grow the sector. While BMS Phase 1 focused on basic science, Phase 2 is oriented towards moving research from the bench to the bedside. Much of the research is centred in the public sector research institutes, who collaborate with universities and hospitals, in their translational medicine efforts. The main areas of research are stem cells, oncology, immunology, neurology, metabolic disorders, and infectious diseases. The research institutes are helmed by renowned international scientists and are staffed by skilled local and international scientists.

There is a growing number of local biotech companies involved in stem cell research, drug discovery and diagnostics.

Medical Technology

There are around 60 medtech companies, mainly MNCs, manufacturing a range of products such as syringes, catheters, hearing aids, contact lenses, stents, pace makers, research instruments and scientific analytical equipment. Several leverage on the scientific and engineering capabilities available in Singapore to develop innovative and cost effective products for the Asian markets.

Singapore accounts for 10% of the world's supply of contact lenses, half of the world's thermal cyclers, and over 50% of the world's micro arrays. The medtech industry manufacturing target is £2.5 billion by 2012. There is also a strong supporting local industry in electronics and precision manufacturing.

In a concerted effort to grow the medtech industry, \$36 million was allocated for scientists to work with universities and hospitals to develop medical devices such as heart stents, pacemakers, diagnostics for stroke and glaucoma, better catheters etc. \$20 million was awarded for research projects in November 2009.

Clinical Trials

The Asian clinical trial market is expected to grow by 20%, and Singapore aims to be the regional centre for clinical trials and drug development.

Major CROs such as Quintiles, Covance, MDS Pharma, PPD, Icon etc are established and expanding in Singapore, to address the growing Asian market. Singapore offers a strategic location in Asia to access a diverse patient base, efficient logistics, Government commitment to the life sciences sector, skilled investigators and manpower, and a good regulatory environment to ensure patient safety during clinical trials.

Singapore was ranked as one of the most competitive countries globally for conducting world class research in a 2006 survey by KPMG, the only Asian country besides Japan.

Upcoming Projects

The BMS landscape in Singapore is dynamic and continues to draw in new players while current companies expand their footprint. Some recent developments include:

- Six new biologics manufacturing facilities at around £1 billion to open from 2011 onwards.
- New/expansion of pharmaceutical plants
- New research labs by pharmaceutical manufacturers and medical devices companies
- New regional headquarters by MNCs for the Asia Pacific market.
- New plants by cardiac products manufacturers.
- New set ups and expansion by clinical trials companies
- New set ups by international companies that supply a range of products, equipment and services to the entire BMS industry.

If you have any questions on the opportunities above, contact the UKTI contacts named in this report. Business opportunities aimed specifically at UK companies are added daily to UKTI's website. These leads are sourced by our staff overseas in British Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates, across all sectors and in over 100 markets.

You can be alerted to business opportunities on a regular basis by registering on the UKTI website. [Find out more on UKTI's business opportunities service on the UKTI website](#)

Major events and activities

Biopharma Asia Conference & Exhibition
www.terrapinn.com/2010/biopharmaasia
Contact: Mina Joshi
Email: Mina.Joshi@ukti.gsi.gov.uk
Time: 28 – 31 March 2011

Interphex Asia Exhibition
www.interphexasia.com
Contact: Valsa Panicker
Email: Valsa.Panicker@fco.gov.uk
Time: 6-8 June 2010

Medtech Manufacturing 2011
www.speta.org
Contact: Valsa Panicker
Email: Valsa.Panicker@fco.gov.uk
Time: 23 – 26 March 2011

Find full details of all events in this country and sector on the UKTI website.
New export events are added daily to the site and [you can register to be alerted to them](#) on a daily, weekly or monthly basis

UKTI's Tradeshow Access Programme (TAP) provides grant support for eligible Small & Medium Sized Enterprises (SME's) to attend trade shows overseas. Find out more about [UKTI support](#) for attendance at overseas events

UKTI contacts

Ms Valsa Panicker
Senior Trade & Investment Attache
British High Commission Singapore
Tel: (0065) 64244 200
Email: Valsa.Panicker@fco.gov.uk
www.ukti.gov.uk

Sarah Croft
First Secretary
British High Commission Singapore
Tel: (0065) 64244 200
Email: Sarah.Croft@fco.gov.uk
www.ukti.gov.uk

Next steps - How UKTI can help

British companies wishing to develop their business in the **Singapore** market are advised to undertake as much market research and planning as possible in the UK. UKTI's team in **Singapore**, with its wide local knowledge and experience, can provide a range of services to British-based companies wishing to grow their business in global markets.

This can include:

- Provision of market information
- Validated lists of agents/distributors
- Key market players or potential customers in the Chinese market
- Establishment of interest of such contacts in working with you

- Arranging appointments
- Organise seminars or other events for you to meet contacts and promote your company in the Chinese market

This work is available via our [Overseas Market Introduction Service \(OMIS\)](#) a chargeable service which assists British-based companies wishing to enter or expand their business in overseas markets.

To find out more about commissioning this work, or accessing other UKTI services and specialist advice, please visit the UKTI website to find [contact details for your local UKTI office](#).

Whereas every effort has been made to ensure that the information given in this document is accurate, neither UK Trade & Investment nor its parent Departments (the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office), accept liability for any errors, omissions or misleading statements, and no warranty is given or responsibility accepted as to the standing of any individual, firm, company or other organisation mentioned.

Published 2010 by UK Trade & Investment.

Crown Copyright ©